

NSRE 2000

Newsletter

Introduction

In 1960 the federal government initiated a National Recreation Survey (NRS) to assess outdoor recreation participation in the United States. Since that first in-the-home survey, six additional NRSs have been conducted in 1965, 1970, 1972, 1977, 1982-83 and 1994-95. In 1994 the NRS was renamed the National Survey on Recreation and the Environment (NSRE). This new name was introduced to reflect the growing interest and emphasis of the U.S. population about their natural environment. Accordingly, the NSRE was expanded to include questions concerning peoples' wildlife and wilderness uses, environmental values, and attitudes regarding recreation policy issues. Additional information pertaining to the recreational needs of people with challenging and disabling conditions was also included.

The Current Survey

NSRE 2000 will be the eighth in the continuing series of U.S. National Recreation Surveys. Although similar to the previous national surveys, the NSRE 2000 will explore in greater depth the outdoor recreational needs and environmental interests of the American people. The growth of NSRE 2000 reflects the continuing growth of interest from our nation in outdoor recreation participation and the natural environment. NSRE 2000 will be an in-the-home phone survey of 50,000 households across all ethnic groups throughout the United States. Questions from NSRE 2000 will broadly address such areas as outdoor recreation participation, demographics, household structure, lifestyles, environmental attitudes, natural resource values (for example, concerning Wilderness), constraints to

participation, and attitudes toward management policies. (NSRE 2000 may be viewed at <http://www.srs.fs.fed.us/recreation>).

Implementation

NSRE 2000 began in July, 1999, and will run over the course of 12 months. Analysis will proceed as data are being collected to produce periodic reports. Several initial meetings were held to discuss the content and format of the NSRE 2000. These meetings resulted in modules concerning wilderness and its use, last trip characteristics, people's lifestyles, and some values, beliefs and objectives relating to natural resources. The participation module was expanded to include some new activities that reflect areas of growing interest such as, mountain biking, inline skating, snow-shoeing, driving for pleasure, motorcycle highway driving, and excursions or tours in an ocean bay, gulf, or inlet.

The Nuts and Bolts

The phone numbers for the NSRE 2000 survey are obtained from Survey Sampling, Inc (SSI). SSI subjects all their numbers to extensive cleaning and validation to ensure that all exchanges are currently valid. SSI provides the NSRE with a random digit dial (RDD) sample using a database of "working blocks." A block is a set of 100 contiguous numbers identified by the first two digits of the last four numbers (e.g., in number 559-4200, "42" is the block). A block is termed to be working if one or more listed telephone numbers are found in that block. Numbers are generated from all eligible blocks in proportion to their density of listed

telephone households. As numbers are pulled, they are marked as used and are not available again during a nine-month period.

Once numbers are selected, they are entered into the computer-aided telephone interviewing system (CATI). The CATI system has two primary functions: (1) it facilitates the dialing and interviewing process; and (2) it manages the administrative functions associated with interviewing. For each interview, the CATI system randomly selects numbers for an interviewer, who then instructs the computer to dial that number. Upon reaching an appropriate person and receiving agreement to an interview, the interviewer reads the survey questions as they appear on the computer screen. Using a computer to control the survey, skip patterns are executed as intended, responses are within range, there are no missing data, and data entry occurs as the survey is administered. If no person is contacted, then a code is entered (e.g., busy, no answer). If the timing of the call is inconvenient, a call back is scheduled for another date and time. If an answer machine is obtained, a brief message is left explaining the NSRE 2000, its importance, and that we will endeavor to reach them at another time and date.

Update On Work In Progress

The first version of NSRE 2000 has been finalized and data collection has started. This first version contains modules of questions relating to people's outdoor recreation participation (e.g., hiking, bird-watching, horseback riding), and coastal participation (e.g., canoeing, sailing, boating). This version also collects demographic information, and information relating to people's environmental opinions, and their attitudes and beliefs regarding the management of natural resources and public lands.

We are presently working on questions regarding special interest topics such as: the use of bicycle safety helmets, wilderness areas, urban trails, and motorcycles; and issues relating to user fees, environmental education, and risk sport activities. Questions addressing the recreational activities and constraints of different subcultures (e.g., Hispanic's, African-American's etc) are also being explored, as are people's lifestyles. Plans for some special comparative studies on wilderness values and attitudes between the Ouchita/Ozark Highlands and the Southern Appalachian Highlands are also being considered.

Recent Publication

The 1995 NSRE resulted in numerous publications, and a new comprehensive book called "Outdoor Recreation in American Life" by H. Ken Cordell, Principal Investigator. Information about the book can be found at <http://www.srs.fs.fed.us/recreation>. Recent publications, such as "The Growing Popularity of Birding in the United States" maybe viewed at <http://www.srs.fs.fed.us/recreation/recent.html>.

Additional News

A special congratulations to Becky Stephens who graduated with her Masters in statistics this May. Well done Becky! Also, a warm welcome to Gary T. Green who has recently joined the NSRE 2000 team from the University of Georgia. Gary will be working closely with Ken and Carter on the NSRE 2000 survey. Gary is currently finishing his doctorate at UGA in Administration within the Recreation and Leisure Studies Program. And, an especially warm welcome to the newest member of Carter Betz's family, Joseph William Antic Betz. Congratulations to Carter and Beth on the birth of their 7 lbs 15 oz bouncing baby boy.

The Working Group

To be successful the NSRE 2000 has incorporated the expertise and help of the following organizations, people and sponsors:

The Southern Research Station, Athens, GA

The Human Dimensions Research Lab,
University of Tennessee, Knoxville, TN

Robert Bryan,
Recreation Vehicle Industry Association

Dan Hellerstein,
Economic Research Service

Ney Landrum,
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or are interested in becoming involved in the
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